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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE CAREER OF MAJOR WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM, OF SOUTH CAROLINA.*

It certainly never should have been a deliberate purpose with us, to offer to our readers a biography of the notorious individual, whose name appears at the head of this paper, nor to disturb the repose of a present generation, with a narrative of the deeds of one who did much to vex the peace and pleasure of the past ;—but we have not been permitted to leave at rest a memory, which nothing but a diseased and mistaken judgment could have wished to summon from those oblivious abodes, into which an indulgent charity was permitting it to sink. An unwise friendship,—a most erring zeal, provokes us to revive the recollections of a history, every page of which contributes to dishonor the life of the person who is thus unhappily set up as the object of a most unmeaning eulogy. In previous notices of that cruel civil warfare, which, in the Carolinas and Georgia, accompanied the great struggle of the Revolution, we drew the attention of the American people to a work, through which an insidious attempt had been made to stigmatize the memories of men, endeared to us as the patriots of that eventful era, and to rescue, at their expense, other names, which, hitherto, have been properly consigned either to forgetfulness or shame. We need not, in this place, before passing immediately to the subject that concerns us, do more than refer

to what has been already written in our several reviews of the "Journal and Correspondence of Samuel Curwen," to escape the necessity of fresh preliminaries. At the close of the article, immediately preceding the present, in which we concluded our examination of the career and case of Robert and Patrick Cunningham of South Carolina, we promised a review of the independent biography, which, in the Appendix to Curwen's volume, had been accorded to William Cunningham of the same State. This biography, evidently from the pen of one whom a blind and stubborn attachment, whether of kindred, or sympathy, has left totally incapable of a proper discrimination, and of that impartial temper which becomes the biographer quite as much as the historian, is too full of provocation, of a sort equally public and private, to suffer it to pass unexamined. Certainly, a bolder attempt to break down the authorities of history, to hustle out of sight the usual memorials of tradition, by sheer audacity of assertion, has not often occurred within the experience of men. Never was there a more blind and daring attempt to apotheosize a monster—to convert the fame of a very bad into that of a very good man—since the discovery of types and presses. It is very seldom, indeed, that a person who, all his life, and long after his death, has been damned to everlasting infamy, is fortunate enough to find an admirer, so blind to proof, and so reckless of all public opinion, as to

* Journal and Letters of the late Samuel Curwen, &c. By George Atkinson Ward. Appendix. Art: Major William Cunningham of South Carolina. 1845.

put himself alone, not merely in maintaining a faith in favor of the condemned—for that may be done in secret and be the more precious to the heart for the very mystery which keeps it silent—but in opposing madly the convictions of the whole world against its favorite—having, at the same time, nothing in support of its attachment, but a blind devotion which steadily refuses to behold the truth. We can, however, forgive this blindness—we can even yield our sympathies to the affection, which, in spite of a world's hostility, still haunts the grave of a worthless favorite with tears—still brings to its lowly altar, a daily tribute of its innocent flow-ers. We are reminded of the devotion of this sort which lingered nightly about the bloody tomb of Nero—a man scarcely worse, if our popular me-morials of William Cunningham be true, than was the latter. The fine lines of Byron rise to us as we write :

“ When Nero perished by the justest doom
Which ever the destroyer yet destroy'd,
Amidst the roar of liberated Rome,
Of nations freed and the world overjoyed,
Some hands unseen strew'd flow'rs upon his tomb.”

But there is a limit to this toleration. While we concede the privilege of grief and homage, in behalf of the victim even of a just sentence, this privilege must not be construed into a right to arraign the propriety of that sentence, to reverse the judgment, or to defame those by whom it was delivered. To justify an attempt like this, there must be new proof sufficient to compel a reconsideration of the case. Our biographer, in the case before us, offers no such proof, and the Historian has nothing more to do than to re-affirm the decision of the past. Still, where the language of assertion is so bold as in the present instance, it may be well to go patiently through all its details, and once more frame anew the judgment for posterity. We shall imitate the example of the author before us, and throw our review of the case of William Cunningham into the form also of biography.

We are told that this man was a cousin to the family of Cunningham, which has already de-manded our attention—that he came with his pa-rents from Virginia, at the same time with the lat-ter—that in 1775, he was a youth of nineteen, and that his opinions sided with those of the *mouve-ment*, or revolutionary party. All this we have at the hands of his biographer, who goes on to tell us that he was a great favorite with the young men of the district, (Ninety-Six,) and exercised considera-ble influence over them. This may, or may not be true. “On this account,” says our author, “he was applied to by John Caldwell, to assist him in raising one of the companies of armed volunteers, embodied under the authority of Congress, for the alleged purpose of keeping the peace and of pre-venting the tories from creating a disturbance.”

These facts show us that William Cunningham's principles, if he had any, were with the patriots. To keep the peace, and to keep down the tories, implied a perfect conviction of the justness and propriety of the objects meditated by the whig party. “To induce him to do so, (raise the volun-teers,) Caldwell agreed that if they succeeded in raising the full complement of men, Cunningham should be made first Lieutenant. All this is rea-sonable enough, but what follows is of a different character. “And should have a right to retire from the company in case they should be sent to the lower country, or ordered on any other service than that specified by Congress.” This sounds strangely. That an officer should qualify his ser-vice, by stipulating what he pleased to do, and what not, seems an after thought entirely, and we must ascribe it wholly to our biographer. But that John Caldwell, his Captain, should enter into any such conditions, is absurd enough. If Cunningham grew sick of the service, he had only to throw up his commission. With that Caldwell had nothing to do. The resignation could only be restored to the Colonel of the Regiment, or to the Civil Authori-ties. But this is a mere pretext. The true story is this : Cunningham, a young fellow of nineteen, naturally enough joined the *mouvement* party. He was a bold, brave fellow, and easily carried away by the excitement. It was his blood and not his brain, which determined his principles. It was known that he committed himself to the whigs. He was at the capture of Fort Charlotte, under the command of Caldwell. He deserted the whigs, left his company, joined the tory party, under his cousin, Robert Cunningham,—and all this must be excused, and accounted for, by his biographer. Ac-cordingly, we are told, that this brave young fel-low stipulates, on taking his commission, that he is not to be carried too far from the domestic dog-hill. The stipulation is opposed equally to what is known of the character of William Cunningham, and the necessities and duties which belonged to the service in which he was engaged. Caldwell commanded a corps of light troops, whose name of “Rangers” indicated the character of the service in which they had embarked. They were frontier soldiers, to be sent hither and thither, out of the province even, at any rate;—anywhere within it, and we accordingly find them everywhere. Troops of this sort, from the Carolinas, traversed the coun-try of the Ohio and the Mississippi. Two compa-nies of Rangers, for example, from Carolina, were under Col. Washington when he first penetrated the Western territory, in his virgin issues with the French. We find them fighting the French on the Tombecbe and Alabama; and subsequently, the English on the Stone. Nowhere, in our his-tories, do we find it written that the “Rangers” could or did stipulate for enjoying their epaulettes only on their farms. Certainly William Cunning-

ham himself never thought of this. "In the course of time," says our biographer, "they were ordered down to Charleston, and Cunningham consented to go down with them on the express condition that he should be permitted to resign as soon as they reached their destination." It is surely very unnecessary to say that this is arrant nonsense. Why go down with the troops at all, if only to resign? The statement is singularly absurd, and only proves to what straits our biographer is reduced to find a means of justification for his hero.

"They were encamped near the city for about a week, and were then ordered either to John's or James' Island. Cunningham immediately tendered his resignation, which, to his surprise, Caldwell refused to accept. Reminding him of their solemn agreement, Cunningham swore he should abide by it, and that if he were taken over to the island, it should only be as a corpse. One half of the company who had joined through Cunningham's influence, showed a strong spirit of mutiny and insubordination, as soon as they heard of the altercation that had taken place; and, at last, to prevent immediate desertion, Cunningham consented to go over, on the renewed condition, that his resignation should be accepted as soon as they should reach the island. No sooner had they landed than Caldwell, thinking to strike terror into his men, and thereby have them more under control, had him arrested, put in irons, and tried by a court-martial on a charge of mutiny."

Of this strange story, our history tells us not a single syllable. The traditions of the country declare a great many things in regard to William Cunningham, but none of this. The whole fabric is new to our public. From what hidden storehouse it has been gleaned, at this late period, it is difficult to conjecture. On the face of it, every reader of sense will discover a latent absurdity. The notion that an officer takes a commission on condition that he is to be excused from its duties—that he should stipulate not to go to the low country—that he should go only on the condition that he is to be permitted to depart the moment he gets there—that he should refuse to go to James' Island, and finally consent to go only on condition that he is to have another privilege of instantly returning—that he should refuse to obey his superior officer, mutinously resist, himself, and lead one half of his men into mutiny, and after all be triumphantly acquitted by a court-martial;—all this seems so entirely foreign to the usual experience of men, and military men in particular, that we must be permitted to express our doubts of the whole story, in the present version, unless sufficient proofs are put before us. At all events, we may reasonably be permitted to demand the finding of the court-martial. Let us have the record of this event. It is perfectly historical in its tenor. It is one of those proofs which the Chronicles should provide. From what source does our biographer derive the fact? We, at least, require a certified copy of the docu-

ment that affords so much material for copious history.

"The result of this shameless and ungrateful act of perfidy was, contrary to Caldwell's expectations, that Cunningham was not only acquitted, but, by a decision of the same Court, freed from his military engagement, on the ground of conditional agreement: and Caldwell became an object of hatred and contempt to a set of men, to whom the unsettled state of the country afterwards afforded ample opportunity of satisfying their resentments, and avenging their private wrongs. Cunningham, himself, was satisfied with treating him with personal indignity and contempt, but the others were, as we shall hereafter have occasion to relate, not content with so bloodless a retaliation."

There is a latent signification in this paragraph, the clue to which will be found without much conjecture. It is evidently a great object with the writer of this biography to render John Caldwell conspicuously odious. This is doubly important, as Caldwell was not only particularly obnoxious to the Tories in consequence of his activity as a revolutionary leader, but because it is necessary to justify the horrible brutalities of which he was finally the victim. We have seen the effort made, in the previous notices of Robert and Patrick Cunningham, to show that it was because of Caldwell's domestic treachery; that Robert Cunningham was conveyed as a prisoner to Charleston. This was in 1775. We find now, in the same period, that the same person is offending, by like treachery, against William Cunningham. We have shown the absurdity of the charges made, on account of the latter, against Caldwell. It now occurs to us as something surprising, that one so habitually given to play the traitor, should be thus frequently trusted by a family of which so many members had reason to complain of his infidelities. But the truth is, all these are after thoughts, mere inventions, for which no proofs have been, or can be furnished. The attempt to disparage the Caldwell family, in the neighborhood where it has always lived, would be equally unwise and ridiculous, and were not these biographies calculated for circulation in other quarters, through Mr. Ward's very loose notions of biographical propriety, we should not care to subject them to the present examination. Something, however, may well be said of Major John Caldwell, the person who is so conspicuous for evil deeds, in the narrative before us. This gentleman, we have already stated, was an ancestor of the present leading statesman of South Carolina. He was the uncle, by the mother's side, of John Caldwell Calhoun. He was among the earliest emigrants to the upper portion of the State. The family came from Charlotte county, Virginia. John Caldwell was the eldest of four brothers. They settled in Newberry District. He was by profession a surveyor; a pursuit, which, in that infant state of the country, naturally gave him

qual prominence and notoriety. We find him, accordingly, taking a decided part in the very dawn of the Revolution. An active leader of the whigs, he became exceedingly odious to the tories—odious, for those very principles and that activity to which we owe those liberties which are our boast at present. He fell a victim to their hatred, as we shall see hereafter; and it will be the duty of the whig historian to defend his memory and to assert his claims against every assault from those whose hostility to him was hostility to the country—to the rights for which he struggled, to the securities and independence which we now enjoy. That he should be denounced by the tories—that they should endeavor to blacken and defile his memory—is just what we may reasonably expect. But that we should suffer their assaults unquestioned, and basely permit to be obliterated the records of the personal good conduct of those to whom we owe so much, would justly subject us to a reproach of shame and ingratitude from which the spirit of the whole nation should honorably shrink. Nor was John Caldwell the only working and doing patriot of his family. The next elder brother, falling a prisoner in the hands of the tories, was immured for nine months in the dungeons of St. Augustine, without being suffered the sight of the sun. The third brother, when but seventeen years of age, was left hacked with thirty sabre wounds, by the dragoons of Tarleton, at the defeat of Buford;—yet he recovered from them all. But for the extremely tender years of the fourth brother, we should probably be required to make a similar record of his patriotism and valor. Let the good citizen of free America ask if such champions of her infant liberties are now to be dishonored, without the least solitary proof, by these tory traditions? But to proceed with our biographer.

"Cunningham having returned to the upper country, still adhered to the whigs, and was with General Williamson in his campaign against the Cherokees, in the autumn of 1776. *After this expedition was over, he declared that, having seen reason to change his opinions, he was determined to continue no longer in the service of the whigs.*"

This is a cool Dugald Dalgetty method, certainly, of boxing the compass. But one is not allowed to change about at pleasure in a great revolution, and while a war prevails throughout the land. It will not do to say that one has changed his opinions. Such a plea will not pass muster at the Drumhead,—has no currency, and should have none, in a case of such exigencies as set a whole people by the ears. It argues silliness or wantonness—a caprice, which is unbecoming to manhood—deliberately to choose one's ground, where great principles are at stake, to beguile others in the same direction, and suddenly chopping round in the opposite direction, to leave our followers

and principles equally to the fate which we are only anxious to escape. Such pleas are wholly inadmissible, and are entirely shameless and impertinent. But the tradition among the whigs relates the story of this sudden change of principle and party, in the case of William Cunningham, in very different fashion. Our biographer does not say in what capacity Cunningham served in the army of Williamson. The story among the whigs ran, that he was a wagoner, and that for some offence, the character of which has not been preserved, he was subjected to the military lash, and very cruelly maltreated. This is the tradition of one party. For what crime he suffered—whether his offence could have justified the brutal severity of his punishment—we do not know, and cannot pretend to say; but this, it is alleged, was the true cause of his abandoning the Revolutionary party, and attaching himself to the Loyalists. We give our biographer all the benefit of the paragraph which follows, premising only that his statements may or may not be true—they rest simply upon his anonymous and unsupported assertion, and must be taken for what they are worth.

"No sooner had he made this declaration, (i. e. his change of principle,) than a system of persecution was commenced against him by those from whose association he had retired, which ended in turning into gall and bitterness all the natural good humor of his heart, and speedily changed a kind and affectionate tempered man into a vengeful and unsparing partisan. He was hunted more like a wild beast than a man, and his only secure place of rest was in the deepest recess of some all but impenetrable forest. He dared not visit any of his family, except by stealth, and under the cloud of night, lest he should bring down upon them also the lawless vengeance of his persecutors, for holding communication with one whom the whigs placed under the van of their displeasure. Thus he lived, sleeping on the ground in the open air, not venturing under cover even for the night, and enduring hardship and privation of every kind, *rather than act with those from whom he had, on due deliberation, conscientiously seceded.*"

Had he not, with due deliberation, conscientiously commenced his career with the whigs? We must assume the conscientiousness in one case as well as in the other. In fact, we may reject it in both cases. William Cunningham, according to all showing, was a creature of mere impulse; a bold, bad man, whose single merit lay in his skill and courage as a partisan. He was brave, and this was the "one virtue, coupled with a thousand crimes," which makes us able to tolerate the cruel story of his career. That he who was the hunter of others, should himself be hunted, is a matter of course. Much of the stuff in the preceding paragraph is quite too vague and indeterminate for criticism. We could have wished that our biographer should state when this skulking in the almost impenetrable forests took place. We too assert, that

he was given to this skulking, and we have good proofs for what we say. We shall show that he skulked, wolf-like, that he might more securely compass the blood of his victim; and like the wolf, he was doomed to have the hound and hunter to rouse him up in his lair when, perhaps, he could have preferred to remain in quiet. But this, during the civil war in Carolina, was a common history. It was the fate of thousands, whig and tory, at one or other period in their lives. What is the language of General Greene on this subject. He writes with horror,—“The people of this country pursue each other like wild beasts.” And who were chiefly the victims in Cunningham’s quarter, where their party was at most periods in the ascendant! Ask the bloody chronicles of more than fifteen hundred widows, in the single district of Ninety-Six alone, whom that terrible strife of seven years bereaved of the fathers of their little ones. The story is one at the expense of both parties. It is a bloody chronicle throughout. The testimony is no doubt equally strong against whig and tory;—but it was reserved to William Cunningham to acquire a bloody renown, conspicuous above, and far superior to all, in the savage brutality which was his habitual practice,—in his unsparing hostility to age and infancy,—to the imbecile, the innocent, those who were no longer able to strike for their defence,—those who were prostrate, in pitiful entreaty, at his knees.

Our biographer, after giving us a woful picture of the privations to which William Cunningham was subject, and taxing grievously our credulity, in the history of his long and patient forbearance,—protracted through a period of interminable length, according to his showing, but in which not a single date is given,—not a single illustrative fact, or reference, by which we might obtain some general tests for ascertaining in how far the statements were true or probable,—proceeds to tell us of one William Ritchie, “who had been in Caldwell’s company,” and “two men of the name of Moore and Cook,” with others, who, failing to find William Cunningham, made his brother John their victim in place of him. This story, like most others which our biographer gives us, has in it some inherent difficulties. Thus, we are told, that, though lame from his birth, and subject to epilepsy, John Cunningham was required to do militia duty. Next, it is said, that “Ritchie had him drafted to serve in the militia.” It need scarcely be said that there needed nothing but a simple proof of John Cunningham’s lameness and epilepsy to secure his discharge; and how Ritchie, or any one man, or dozen of men, could procure his being drafted,—that process depending upon lots drawn from the militia as regularly enrolled,—it is scarcely possible to see. The facts, as gathered from the pages before us, seem to be these: Ritchie was a next door neighbor of Cunningham, and they

were at feud. John Cunningham, whether with sufficient reason or not, had eluded militia duty, and Ritchie reported him as a fit subject. He was summoned to muster, and refused to appear. Thus far the history seems a simple one enough. The rest, as it appears in the narrative before us, is much less so. According to this narrative, Ritchie Moore and Cook proceeded to Cunningham’s house to arrest him. “He abused them in no measured terms,” says our biographer, and under this provocation, they brutally whipped him to death! All this may be true, but it is a history that is now given to the world for the first time—now, when there is not a single witness to be found either to maintain or to deny the accusation. If John Cunningham was not a decrepit, and resisted the officers who were sent for his arrest, it is probable they put him to death. If the story is true, as told by our biographer, it will not be difficult to trace the whole brutal behavior of the party, to one of those vile petty domestic feuds, which, to this day, so frequently bring about the most bloody results in our little country villages. The provocations are always social and domestic, in such cases, and general events are simply seized upon, to furnish pretexts for personal excesses. This biography does not belong to general history. We find no proofs of it any where. It cannot, therefore, be employed to justify an abandonment of principles, in which the great interests of a nation are involved. Of John Cunningham, Captain Ritchie, the Moores and the Cooks, concerned in this transaction, the records are wholly silent. None of them were ever men of note. They lived and died, and made no sign. Of Ritchie, we are again told, that not content with whipping young Cunningham to death, he seized upon the old man, his father, in his own house, and dragging him from his bed, “kicked and cuffed him till he was tired.” And all this is done without any provocation. All this wanton brutality of Captain Ritchie is without excuse. Old Cunningham is an invalid in bed, harmless and unoffending,—young Cunningham is a poor decrepit, the victim to epilepsy; and Ritchie, their next door neighbor, whose farm joins that of the Cunninghams, is the reckless monster by whom these unmeaning and gratuitous crimes are committed. There is surely something wanting to this history,—and when we find, as we invariably do, in this biography, that William Cunningham proves, in the sequel, to be the murderer of all those against whom our anonymous biographer furnishes a secret history, we are led to wonder how it is that people so gentle, patient and unoffending, as are the Cunninghams, should yet provoke such bitter hatred among their neighbors,—how neighbors, so fierce, brutal and bloodthirsty, should yet yield themselves such easy victims to the patient and long-forbearing William Cunningham. We do not pretend to doubt, that God may achieve his

terrible revenges, by the hands of the feeble and the timid, even upon the bold and powerful, but the history before us is rather too uniform. The Caldwells, the Ritchies, the Moores, the Cooks, and fifty others, become the victims to William Cunningham, the avenger;—and we cannot but avow our conviction, that tradition has been at some pains to justify the atrocities of the murderer, by finding crimes for the victims, of which neither themselves, nor their neighbors, ever supposed them to be guilty. It is rather a suspicious circumstance, that these traditions, which deal in such circum-spect detail, should be forthcoming only now when the contemporaries of the Caldwells, Moores, Cooks and Ritchies, should be mouldering in the same silent mansions with themselves.

Our biographer, while he insists upon the original gentleness and meekness of William Cunningham's character, is evidently quite too proud of his exploits to suppress them. He comes from Savannah, where he has been with the British army, to avenge his brother. He proceeds at once to Ritchie's house, and shoots him down while he is seeking to escape. Moore he also pursues, "and after a few words of taunting contempt, cuts him down with his sword." Neither of these desperate offenders made the least show of battle, and both of them are slain while seeking safety in flight. Cunningham's deeds were chiefly effected by surprises. Familiar with the country, for his early career as a wagoner had taught him all its routes, he was not often out of his reckoning, and he was the possessor of two or more horses of remarkable speed and bottom. Our biographer finds a pet subject in one of these animals, which was called "Ringtail;" one to which his owner had taught several useful lessons, which greatly contributed to his safety. The subject beguiles him into pathos. He tells us that this horse, having saved his master's life, fell a victim to fatigue; and, dying in Charleston, Major Cunningham, "Bloody Bill," "the heartless, unfeeling monster," as in their lying histories they called him, wept like a child over his poor favorite and friend, as he was wont to term him. "*He had him buried with the honors of war,—the bells of Charleston were toll-ed, and volleys were fired over the hero of many fights.*"

After this specimen from the biography, we scarcely know whether it would be worth our while gravely to continue its examination. The writer whom such a ridiculous story could deceive, would swallow any thing. Only think of the British garrison in Charleston, under Lord Rawdon, General Stewart, Cornwallis or Balfour—where Cunningham had no command whatsoever—only think of their suffering such a farce!—and that we should still think William, the Tender-hearted, a murderer and a ruffian, after all this pathetic blub-bering over his horse! How monstrous! But our

biographer should know that there are people who would weep over a horse, who would never shed a tear over a fellow creature. These anomalies will occur. The Arabian, who shoots down the traveller without remorse, is the most affectionate lover of his favorite steed. Ladies have been known to weep over pet puppies, who had tears for no better creature. It is Byron who tells us, speaking of Ali Pasha of Jannina, that he was "the mildest manner'd man that ever cut a throat." But why multiply illustrations. Enough that this single instance of William Cunningham's tender-heartedness is not sufficient, to remove the stains from his memory of fifty cold-blooded murders. We must insist upon other proofs. We do not find them in the next paragraph, at the hands of our biographer.

"After the capitulation of Charleston, a great many whigs renewed their oaths of allegiance to the King, and yet when success appeared to favor the whig cause, they reassumed arms against the British. Cornwallis issued orders that all such, when taken, should be put to death as rebels, who had forfeited their lives by breaking the oaths of fealty they had so short a time previously taken. Major Cunningham, then an officer in the British service, was one of those who received these orders, and *who executed them rigorously on all such offenders as fell into his power. Away with the sickly sentimentality that would say that he did wrong in so doing!*"

We are sorry, for the sake of our biographer, if not for that of the criminal whom he would protect, that we cannot admit the plea so confidently urged. His duty as a soldier is one thing—that of the butcher is another. Cornwallis might properly require him to fight, and to destroy in fight, the enemies of the crown:—he could not require him to be a hangman. He did not often require it at the hands of British officers. It was the provincial, the tory, who was always foremost to do the dirty work of the royal officers; and if Cunningham had not himself relished the service, no power on earth could have made him legally perform it. His duty with his captives was to turn them over to his superiors. He should have accorded to them the pleasant privilege of officiating as hangmen. Had this course been taken, the butchery would have been greatly diminished. The excuse of the British was, that the murders and atrocities were usually executed by those whose personal revenges made them heedless of military rule and propriety.

But even this plea must not be allowed in the case of William Cunningham. It is not for the murders that he committed on account of Lord Cornwallis that he is arraigned; but for those which he committed on his own account. No doubt there is a long and terrible array of crimes against him, for which, at the Eternal tribunal, the authorities of the royal officers would be urged in vain. But the victims are sufficiently numerous, whose

blood is upon the hands and head of this offender, against whom there could be urged no civil or military treachery—who broke no pledges of fealty—took no oaths of allegiance, and violated no parole. And here let us look a little into their history, rather loosely given, which we owe to our biographer, touching these oaths of allegiance, and this forfeiture of life, because of their violation. Really, if this biography had been written by the most bitter enemy to American liberties, or the American name, it could not more completely adapt its case to favor the British cause in all particulars. The whigs *did not* renew their oaths of allegiance,—they took paroles, the tenor of which was, that they should be protected by the British while they remained pacific. But the British finally failed to protect them—were driven away from their neighborhoods, *and the parole which could not afford protection could not exact fidelity.* In this condition of things, Lord Cornwallis himself declared these paroles void and of no effect, the better to compel the people to bear arms for the royal cause. The treachery was on the part of the royal officer, and its effect was decidedly the reverse of his desires. Compelled to draw the sword, the whigs, who had taken the paroles, thus rendered void, very naturally drew the weapons in behalf of the country. It was the policy of Cornwallis and Rawdon to have it appear that there was treachery in the business, and that the lives of such persons were forfeited. Several were hung at Camden, Charleston, and other places; but the argument was futile; was yielded finally by the British themselves;—the case of Hayne being the last instance, and one of the most conspicuous of judicial murder, committed under this view of the facts; and that we should have an American, at this time of day, endeavoring to furnish a justification for atrocities which even British jurists and Generals no longer endeavored to justify, is perfectly monstrous. But there is a singular blindness and perverseness in all the matter of these biographies; the tone and spirit of which would better suit the times in which the deeds, now examined, had their birth, than the present era of humanity and Christian enlightenment.

We come now to events in this biography, the materials for which we have drawn not less from the Historians, than from tradition and living witnesses. We have before us, at this moment, a considerable mass of original testimony from unquestionable sources, gathered in the very neighborhood where the facts which form our subject had their occurrence. We shall be compelled to furnish very different versions of the events from those which are spread over this biography. But it may be well to afford this writer an opportunity to justify wherever he thinks proper to attempt it. We shall find him, as before, taking care to premise the atrocities of Cunningham by vague statements of

similar atrocities on the part of those who became his victims. Thus we are told, that “among the whigs who distinguished themselves by their cruelties to the tories, were a Col. Hays and a Mr. Turner.” No particulars are given of the cruelties of these persons; but, soon after, Cunningham appears, and Hays and Turner are both butchered in cold blood. So, Daniel Williams was hung for having killed Thomas Ellison, one of Cunningham’s followers:—So, having hung Oliver Towles, we are told he was famous for stealing tory cattle.

“As a species of poetical justice, Cunningham had him hanged with a thong out from a tory cow’s hide.” The levity with which the statement is made, seems to accord happily with the sort of spirit by which the crimes of Cunningham were committed. Our biographer finds a sort of plea, or excuse, for all the deeds of his favorite. Does he hang his victim in cold blood? There is some one to rise up and say, he stole my yearling. And our biographer seems to think this hanging and butchering all perfectly justified by such allegations. We cannot suffer an entire country to be defamed, and a noble and honorable community to be slandered, in order that a character like that of William Cunningham should be rescued from richly merited opprobrium. We must insist upon our narrative of one, at least, of his expeditions. This will suffice for all the rest. And first, touching the repute of Cunningham at the close of the war, when his deeds were fresh in every recollection—when, if there had been a plea at all, it should have been put in—when, if there had been a solitary proof in the matter, it was still available to both parties.

One of the first public acts done in the Courts of South Carolina, after the organization of its Judiciary into form, was the reading of the following proclamation:

“Whereas William Cunningham, John Lawrence, alias John Lane, and William Lee have perpetrated sundry murders, robberies and other offences in the back parts of this State,—and have baffled all pursuit for apprehending them, by being, (as it is believed,) harbored by wretches as unprincipled and unfeeling as themselves. . . . To the end, therefore, that such villains may be brought to condign punishment, the General Assembly have directed that I should, in and by this proclamation, offer a reward of *Three Hundred Guineas* for the taking of the said William Cunningham, dead or alive;—and *One Hundred Guineas* for each of the other two—with a free and full pardon for those who will apprehend such offenders.

Given under my hand, &c., this 27th day of March, 1783. (Signed.)

BENJAMIN GUERARD.”

Now, why is it that Cunningham and two other offenders, of all the tories of the Revolution in South Carolina, are thus singled out for the exemplary satisfaction of the laws? Why do we find them thus separated from all their associates, and

made the special subjects of legislative proscription! The question almost unavoidably suggests the answer, which will be found sufficiently detailed in the history which follows.

William Cunningham no where appears to have distinguished himself as a warrior. Commencing, according to the local tradition, as a wagoner in Williamson's expedition, and in some way offending against his superiors, or confederates, he is subjected to a degrading punishment, and betakes himself to the British army in Georgia. He renounces his old principles, those for which he had been willing to fight at the opening of the conflict, and we hear of this renunciation only after his alleged chastisement, and only after the British had obtained certain successes in Georgia, and had given to the united arms of America and France, under Lincoln and D'Estatig, a complete defeat at Savannah. He achieves nothing during all this period. We hear of him no where as a man of mark. As a leader of men, in other than small predatory bodies, assailing and surprising the defenceless and the feeble, we never hear of him at all. It is only after the British have captured Charleston,—only after Cornwallis and Rawdon have overrun the colony and planted their petty fortresses, in commanding positions, in and about its chief settlements, that the name of William Cunningham appears in history. He is an active partisan in the bloody civil war which followed the rising of the several bands of patriots, under Marion, Sumter, Pickens, Hammond, Hampton, Thomas and other popular leaders throughout the province. He is conspicuous as a pursuer and persecutor of the whigs in the Saluda country and the contiguous districts. He had all the blood-hound facility of finding and running down his feeble prey, as had Claverhouse in the chase of the Cameronians and Covenanters;—and, a first rate horseman, an apt, acute, and experienced woodman, a bold and daring soldier, reckless and unsparing, he acquired a local distinction, and a terrible notoriety for his crimes, long before the British were compelled to seek refuge in the settlements more immediately along the sea. Compelled to retreat with them to the seaboard, he availed himself,—with all the skill and audacity of the partisan,—of all those fluctuations in the tide of war, which sometimes made the Americans fall back after their successes,—to dash into the interior, and write blood and havoc upon cot and hamlet, in token of his presence, where he came. But for the cruel nature of the warfare which he waged—his wild and wanton revenges—his coarse, unsparing brutality, we should unhesitatingly accord to him the merit of being, in these forays, a most daring and admirable partisan. He was certainly never wanting in the resources of courage, celerity and skill. But all these virtues of the soldier were obscured and dishonored by the vicious passions of the savage. It

is idle to talk of any justification for his deeds, by a reference to his alleged, or suspected wrongs. His biographer seems to think that his revenges were the most natural and excusable things in the world. He appears to write as if a soldier need not be a Christian—need not be human; and as if the wanton injuries which Cunningham and his family experienced at the hands of a brutal neighbor, were sufficient to justify this bloodthirsty criminal in waging indiscriminate warfare against the entire community. It is not the least offensive feature in the article before us, that the atrocities of Cunningham are spoken of in a tone and spirit of levity, and sometimes exultation, which are perfectly shocking to every civilized nature, and betray an almost total disregard of those moral standards, which, in this era of enlightenment, might be supposed to be commonly and sufficiently well understood, even in the darkest corners of our forest country. But it is the blinding devotion of the partisan, anxious only to make out his case, which, in the writer before us, perverts a naturally good understanding, and makes him behold all his objects as "through a glass darkly."

In the fall of 1781, the British and Tories, having been expelled the preceding summer from the district of "Ninety-Six," which they had converted into a vast realm of ruin, William Cunningham, then a Major of loyalists with a British commission, taking advantage of the temporary absence of the American squadrons from the route, made his way towards the scene of his former atrocities, at the head of a force considerably larger than he had been accustomed to command. It is alleged in his defence, that he left the city with the authority of General Leslie, under secret orders from that General, and from his cousin, General Cunningham. It may have been that he had his orders from these gentlemen. It may have been—nay, must have been, that he had the sanction for his march, at least, from his superiors; but that his secret orders implied instructions for the performance of those deeds which vexed humanity, and must disgrace his name forever, is what cannot be assumed in any instance, and must not be tolerated here, when we have the assurance,—as soon as Cunningham's career was known,—that Leslie, a British General of intelligence and high character, denied and disclaimed these deeds in words of scorn and execration: while General Robert Cunningham, whose fair fame we should be the last to impeach, is known to have utterly repudiated the expedition and to have spoken in language of stern disapprobation of the unprincipled man, who presumed to employ his name as a cover for his atrocities. Nor was the denial and denunciation of the crimes committed in this foray, confined to these responsible officers. The British soldiers, and all the more honorable loyalists, concurred in the condemnation of this barbarous incursion, with the just horror of men, who,

in the strife with their foes, have not yet wholly surrendered up their humanities on the bloody altars of Moloch. This, however, was done by William Cunningham. He did not leave the city with his force, or, at all events, they did not march through the country together. Breaking into small bodies, the better to elude observation, and to prey upon the country as they went, they made their first full rendezvous in Edgfield District. Here, according to all popular accounts, Cunningham made his appearance with a force not much less than three hundred men. The writer before us asserts, in his usual confident manner, that it did not exceed one hundred and fifty. As he quotes no authority for the assertion, we prefer to follow the received statements. In truth, his numbers could not accurately be stated. Their object being massacre and plunder, they scattered themselves over the country, small bands operating simultaneously at several points in a district. Our biographer, with an innocent inexperience, that is absolutely refreshing to the moralist and Christian, frankly tells us that Cunningham's purpose, "was to inflict punishment on those" who had been guilty of inhumanity to the Tories. In other words, it was not with the view to the successful prosecution of the war—for that was now hopeless, the struggle between the two nations drawing very rapidly to its close;—it was not that the favorite principles which he professed, should be urged and prosecuted—it was simply that he should wreak his vengeance upon those by whom he supposed himself or his friends to have been injured. That Leslie, or Robert Cunningham, or any British officer, should be assumed, or supposed to have given their sanction to such a mission, is ridiculous. That they should have sanctioned an expedition at all, the purpose of which was not to maintain the leading objects of the war, or after that war had become hopeless, is out of the question; and hence the probability of that tradition which describes William Cunningham as having stolen secretly away from the seaboard into the interior, his followers going forth in like manner, and joining him on the route. But tradition goes a little farther in describing the objects of this incursion. It asserts that plunder, as well as blood, was the desire of these marauders;—that, seeing the British troops preparing to depart the country and yield the struggle, they felt that it was no longer the country in which they could remain, and that it was necessary to get together, as promptly as possible, the provision and resources for their future maintenance in a strange land. Florida was the favorite place of retreat for the loyalists in those days, and to that region herds of the Tories had already begun to turn their eyes. Here, from the first beginning of the Revolution, in 1775, had they made their way, carrying with them as many negroes and cattle of the rebels as might be led or driven into this

rogue's Canaan. The party under William Cunningham, it is alleged, by the sufferers whom they despoiled, were not insensible to this policy; and the secret expedition which Leslie and Robert Cunningham refused to sanction, distinguished itself quite as much by its appropriations as by its murders. They adopted a Jewish policy, without waiting for the word of any prophet; and took care to spoil the Egyptian of his goods and chattels, before leaving for their Land of Promise.

The force under Cunningham's immediate command, after leaving Charleston, proceeded with equal celerity and secrecy to the Rogue's Ford, on the Edisto. Here they extended themselves on every hand. They were a motley gathering, for whom horses, in most cases, had yet to be provided. These were to be found in the stables of the whigs, and there they seized them. Though broken into small detachments, the party acted in concert, and from the Edisto made their way to the Saluda. One squad, under the command of a man named Williams, pushed on to the neighborhood of Mount Willing, where they plundered the inhabitants of horses, cattle, and other property. The same game was played by another party led by a Captain Radcliffe. The rumor of these depredations roused up a party of whigs, who, without any acknowledged leader, went in pursuit of the marauders. The names of some of this party are now before us—Smallwood Smith, Matthew Jones, and James Butler, Jr.,—the last named, a youth of nineteen. They followed the squad of Radcliffe to the Big Saluda, which they found swollen by heavy rains. Here young Butler swam the stream and brought over a canoe from the opposite side, by means of which the party got over. They found the trail of Radcliffe's band, continued the pursuit with caution, and succeeded in surprising him. In the fight which followed, several were killed, among them Radcliffe himself, and his party was dispersed. The detachment under Williams was subsequently followed, in like manner, by a small body of whigs, commanded by Captain Sterling Turner. These men, twenty-one in number, belonged to Turner's beat; but they called upon Captain James Butler, the elder, to head them in the expedition. Butler declined to interfere with, or to supersede Turner in his command; but he went with the party as a volunteer. He had, but a short time before, been released from a British prison, where he had remained eighteen months. Turner pursued with sufficient promptness. He came up with Williams near Lexington Court House, and reclaimed and recovered the stolen property—the force under Williams being too weak to offer much resistance, yet quite strong enough to render it politic, on the part of Turner, to content himself with getting back the plundered chattels. Unfortunately, he was not an experienced Captain, and, contrary to the advice of some of the more prudent of his party, he

halted for rest and refreshment, at a small unfinished house on Cloud's creek, within a few hundred yards of the lower line of Edgefield district; the place itself being in Lexington. Here a beef was killed, and while the party were busy in dressing it, they were surprised by Cunningham, at the head of the greater body of his men, estimated at three hundred, or three hundred and fifty. Turner's squad instantly fled for shelter to the unfinished house, which was of logs. Here they were fired on by the assailants, but without suffering injury—a parley followed, and Smallwood Smith and Matthew Jones were sent out by Turner to treat with Cunningham. The latter cut short their mission, by asking if they were of the party by whom Radcliffe had been slain. When he was told that they were, he answered, "You shall all die! I give no quarters!" Smith and Jones, attempting to return to Turner, were both shot down; and not perishing instantly from the shot, were butchered by the sword. This spectacle informed the inmates of the house what was to be their fate, and they determined to defend themselves to the last. They did so with fatal effect, until all their ammunition was exhausted. Several of the assailing party were slain and others wounded. It was proposed that they should surrender in a temporary cessation of the fight. The elder Butler said, "For myself I have no hope; but if by surrender my son can be saved, I have no objection." But the youth disclaimed the idea of saving himself if his father was to perish, and, firing his rifle,—the ball of which shattered the powder horn of one of the assailants, named Stuart, who was concealed behind a tree,—he received a mortal wound through his body a moment after. "I am a dead man," he exclaimed, "but there are yet three bullets in my pouch." The father, who was also wounded,—a brave and stout-hearted soldier,—took the missiles and faithfully discharged them. The ammunition of the party wholly consumed, a hand-to-hand fight followed, with the butts of their guns. Overcome at length by numbers, the survivors, with two exceptions, were brought out into a ring, and, hemmed in by their enemies, were deliberately hewn to pieces by the sword. The two persons who were suffered to live, were Stanley Webb and Bartley Bledsoe, who were claimed to be loyalists, at heart, by some of the more humane among the assailants. There were two Bledsoes, John and Bartley; the first was a tory, the second a whig. The whig was saved by being confounded with his tory brother, while the tory was actually murdered by his friends, who supposed him to be the whig. Tradition has preserved most of the names of the victims who perished on this occasion. These were Sterling Turner, James Butler, Sr., James Butler, Jr., Smallwood Smith, Burditt Escribidge, Benjamin Bell, William Scissom, John Bland,

Gideon Nicholson, Mat. Jones, Peter Foy, — Sullivan, John Bledsoe, and Nat Corley.

This bloody deed is thus coolly dismissed in a couple of sentences, by the biographer of William Cunningham: "Both Turner and Hays occupied military 'stations.' Turner's was the first encountered: it was taken, and the men put to death." There is no little *sang froid* in this way of dismissing men to judgment. We shall come to the affair of Hays hereafter. The attempt to make a military station of the log-house to which Turner's party retreated in their emergency, is quite an ingenious mode of dignifying the exploits of Cunningham. But we must deprive him of the merit of capturing this military station, and of the justification tacitly suggested here by the idea of a massacre under a storm. There was no military station on Cloud's Creek. The house in question was nothing more than a place of refuge, to which the party of Turner fled in the moment of surprise. The victims, whom our biographer stigmatizes as "marauders," were all respectable landholders, with the reputation in the neighborhood of being honest men. That they should be charged as marauders, thus perishing on their own ground, by the apologist and eulogist of those who, according to his own showing, came more than a hundred miles to destroy them, is absurd on the face of it. Several of them had seen service; some of them had held offices of trust and confidence before the war broke out. The Butler family had always been confessedly among the most respectable in the country. As our biographer is pleased to speak sneeringly of this family, it may be well to give a brief sketch of it, as it is commonly known in Carolina.

The Butlers of "Ninety-Six" trace their descent from Irish ancestry. William Butler, who married a Miss Mason, of Virginia, lived and died in London county. His son, known in South Carolina as Captain James Butler, came to that State and settled near "the Ridge," about 1770. He was opposed to the stamp act, and early committed himself to the cause and principles of the Revolution. He joined in the Snow-Camp expedition, of which a brief history was given in the preceding papers of this series. Under the command of General Williamson he led a company against the Cherokee Indians. He was in the Florida expedition, so wretchedly concluded by Gen. Charles Lee; and returned to South Carolina, in 1778, to pass under the command of General Lincoln. Rejecting the offer of a British protection, after the capitulation of Charleston, he was thrown into the "Provost" of that city and transferred from thence to the prison ship. He was but three weeks released from this horrible dungeon, when he fell a victim, as we have just narrated, to the butchery of Cunningham, at Cloud's Creek. Of the fate of young James Butler, the history has just

been written; but there was another son, William Butler, of whom we shall speak hereafter, when it becomes necessary to show him in direct conflict with the murderer of his father. A third son, Thomas, was also, at the time of this bloody tragedy, in the service of the country. The bereaved widow was on the couch of disease, suffering from small pox, with four young children, two girls, 15 and 12, and two boys, 10 and 8 years old,—helpless and hopeless, when, two days after the massacre, an old man brought tidings of it to the household. Another melancholy history follows these tidings. There were but few men in the neighborhood, and those who were friendly dared not show themselves out of their hiding places. The melancholy duty of looking after the remains of the dead, of performing the last filial and humane offices, devolved wholly upon women. Sarah Smith, sister-in-law of Smallwood Smith, who was one of the massacred, Nancy Butler, with her aunt, assisted by several friendly females, proceeded in a common wheeled-sled to the scene of massacre, designing to bring the bodies home for burial. But they found them so horribly mangled by the sabre, that few or none of them could be distinguished. One looked to find a father, another a husband, a third a brother, in the mangled carcass that she washed with affectionate and pious devotion, and washed in vain. It was found necessary to give to the wretched remains of the party a common grave. A rude stone marks the place of burial to this day, and bears the initials of the two Butlers. But such were the tender mercies of these avenging tories, who have so recently found their eulogist, that even the melancholy offices thus assigned to the wretched and bereaved women, who thus proved their sex and their devotion together, were not suffered to be performed without farther humiliations. Taking for granted that the friends of the victims would come to bury the dead, and that new victims might thus be gleaned at the grave of the former, Cunningham had placed in concealment a detachment of men, overlooking the spot, and ready to renew the work of slaughter as soon as the unconscious mourners should appear. These were rightly placed under the command of a miserable wretch, named Westcoat, who, finding himself disappointed in the hope of a second butchery, and that none but females would appear, amused himself by the most brutal and indecent jests, to the unhappy women busied themselves in the terrible task of seeking through the mangled carcasses, for the lineaments of the beloved ones. He regaled their ears with the most cold-blooded details of the butchery, and how the victims had behaved when given to the sword. Turner, he said, "bounced from the ground like a ball, with every cut of the sabre;"—"others got upon their knees and implored for mercy," but "old Butler was so damned tough and obstinate, that they found it hard work

to kill him," and "he made no prayers for life." A man, named Love, played a prominent part in this game of butchery, amusing himself with chopping off the limbs, and so wounding the sufferers as to cause the most horrible contortions. He acted a like part at the subsequent massacre at Hays' station, and we shall hear of him hereafter, when he is made to feel that, however remote, the day of retribution is nevertheless always certain. We may well pass from this horrible chapter, but to another not less so.

Leaving Cloud's Creek, Cunningham, with the main body of his men, proceeded up the Cherokee road towards Saluda Old Town, burning and slaughtering as he went. One of his victims was Samuel Abney, whose houses he gave to the flames. His approach drove the male inhabitants off, either seeking places of security, or in the search after a sufficient force to contend with the unexpected marauders. It was in vain that the women threw themselves at his feet and entreated that their dwellings might be spared to them, at a season when the winter was rapidly approaching. They were perhaps only too fortunate that they got off with their lives. The biographer before us remarks, that "not even his greatest enemies have ever alleged that, stern as he was, he was at any time guilty of harshness or cruelty towards women or children." And this assertion is made in the very teeth of a tradition which furnishes hundreds of details, justifying the brief summary which we give in the preceding sentences. Having burnt Anderson's mills and outhouses, which had formerly been used by Col. Hammond as a military post, but which were now untenanted, he crossed the Big Saluda, and made his way to the farmstead of his ancient enemy, John Caldwell. He was now about to feed fat the ancient grudge, which our biographer has suffered to appear sufficiently often in his narrative. The house of Caldwell stood in the centre of his plantation, which was level, and, for that period, of considerable extent. The rumor that "Bill Cunningham" and his band were in the country, and committing the most dreadful ravages in an adjoining district, had reached the ears of Caldwell. The known hatred which was borne him by the tories, had made his wife exceedingly anxious upon this intelligence, and she had urged him strenuously to withdraw for a while, and conceal himself. He consented when it was too late. His horse was actually saddled, and at the door, and he was drawing on his boots for his departure, when the house was surrounded by the detachments of his enemy. Flight was now impossible, and resistance would have been idle. The banditti were led by Cunningham himself. The unarmed and unresisting man was seized in his chair, carried out into the open yard, and a circle of soldiers being formed around him, their leader setting the example, the victim was delib-

erately hacked to death, in the presence of his wife. The house and outbuildings were then destroyed by fire, at the command of this considerate chieftain, whose brutality was never experienced by infancy or womanhood!

Let us now relate another incident that occurred in this bloody progress. There was one Stokeley Towles, a sturdy whig, who happened to be ill of the small pox, and hearing of Cunningham's approach, he concealed himself in his fodder house. One of Cunningham's party, named Edward Turner, by whom Towles was well known, detaching himself from his squad, rode up to Towles' house, and, pretending the utmost friendship for him, and that he came to save him, persuaded the wife of Towles to reveal the secret of his hiding place. The foolish and confiding woman, glad to find a friend in the band of the marauders, sent her little son, John, with Turner, to where the father lay hid. The boy was tutored to summon Towles from his hiding-place, and when the unhappy man, beguiled by the accents of his own child, made his appearance, he was instantly and mercilessly shot down in the presence of the innocent boy, who was thus made the blind instrument for the murder of his parent. The murderer then rode off to join his comrades, leaving the boy to carry to his mother the dreadful commentary upon her own weakness, which the cruel history itself conveyed. We may as well finish this little history in this place: It will tend somewhat to illustrate that bloody scout, of which the biographer of William Cunningham is so pleasant an apologist. Turner, at the close of the war, fled to Florida, or to the Bahamas, and remained absent until the year 1807, when, supposing the past forgotten, and assuming, perhaps, that he would be unrecognized, he revisited the State and was seen at the house of Mrs. Stewart, his sister, who lived on the Saluda. John Towles, the boy whom Turner had employed to call his father from his hiding-place, had now become a man. William, an infant at the time of his father's death, was a man also. They became aware of Turner's reappearance, and resolved upon his death. The eldest boy had treasured a terrible recollection of the crime, of which he was cruelly made the instrument. They proceeded to Mrs. Stewart's by night. The guilty man hearing the feet of horse, with the instincts of crime actively working in his conscience, at once divined the nature of the visit. He said to his sister,—"it is the Towles'," and endeavored to make his escape by the door. But his assailants were too cool and resolute. William Towles, the younger, shot him through the neck, and brought him to the ground, to all appearances dead. John Towles was about to make the matter certain, when the younger Towles, arresting his pistol, exclaimed, "never shoot a dead man!" And thus they spared him, and thus his life was saved. The wound was not

fatal. The sister drew the wounded man within doors and found him living. But she kept her secret. She put in circulation the story of his death—had his coffin prepared, his grave dug, and, going through all the ceremonies of a public burial, she disarmed suspicion! Not daring to employ a surgeon, she herself tended the hurts of the wounded man, cured him, and contrived to send him forth in secrecy and safety from the country. That sister was a heroine, and deserved to have had a nobler brother! We can not reproach the Towles' for seeking to destroy their foe, and we must honor the generous devotion of the sister who thus nobly baffled their desires!—Let us now follow Cunningham to "Hays' station."

We hope, in our next number, to conclude this domestic history.

THE SUMMER CHILD.

"Go then, my first-born, my summer-child; and if there may never more come a summer to the heart of thy mother—still go! that thou mayest have rest."—*F. Bremer.*

When life was young and bright,
And "friends and fortune smiled,"
Then sawest thou the light,
My first, my Summer-Child!

My joy I could not speak,
It was too deep, too wild,—
I kissed thy tender cheek,
And murmured, "Summer-Child."

As years rolled swift away,
Fair sisters at thy side
Shared in thy childish play,
But thou wert still my pride.

And when our cheerful hearth
My children gathered round,
Thine was the voice whose mirth
Had e'er the sweetest sound.

Altho' young maidens grew
In beauty in my home,
My heart to thee was true,
From thee it could not roam.

And with a mother's joy,
I marked thy noble mind,
And saw my cherished boy
To every good inclined.

My soul with pride elate
Beheld thy budding youth,
Thou grewest to man's estate
Unsullied in thy truth.

THE SOUTHERN AND WESTERN LITERARY MESSENGER AND REVIEW.

OCTOBER, 1846.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE CAREER OF MAJOR WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM, OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

We resume our review of the biography of William Cunningham, contained in the appendix to Curwen's Journal and Letters. At the close of our last paper, we left Cunningham, at the head of his main force, making his way to a place called "Hays' Station." The name of this place, at that period, was Edgehill. Its name was subsequently changed to that of the unfortunate Captain, whose blood served to re-baptize it. Edgehill was a mere block house, manned by scarcely more than twenty men, who were under the command of Col. Joseph Hays. Hays is said by our biographer to have been apprised of Cunningham's proximity. Our own authorities, on the contrary, assert, that William Caldwell, the brother of John, having the good fortune to escape the fate of the latter, endeavored to reach Edgehill, to inform Hays of his danger; but failed to do so in season. He was compelled to pursue a circuitous route, and to move cautiously, while Cunningham was equally direct and rapid in his movements. The fact is no ways important. Warned or not, Hays was surrounded by the troops of Cunningham and required to surrender. Shots were exchanged, but without doing any mischief,—when the overwhelming force of the assailants effectually shut out the hope that the besieged could defend themselves successfully, and they offered to treat with the besiegers. Our authorities assert that a composition was entered into, and that the garrison of this little post were admit-

ted to terms as prisoners of War. Here, however, the biographer of Cunningham joins issue with us. He tells the story in this fashion. The garrison is commanded to surrender, under pain of being put to death if a shot is fired—they do fire, and blood is spilt—they afterwards surrender at the last extremity and at discretion, and they are massacred accordingly. This is the substance of his statement—a statement for which no authority is offered whatsoever. Our account of the affair is sustained by the current narrations of the historians, and the country, for the last sixty years. The assertion of an unknown writer, now, when there is no new testimony to be had, cannot, for a single instant, be allowed to weigh against the received statements of the historians, and the current testimonies of tradition for half a century. The crime is much the same in both statements. By what right does a Captain presume to say to a party, which honorably defends itself, that, in the event of being overthrown, they shall be put to death? It seems, according to our biographer, that Hays was smoked out of his den by a process similar to that by which Marion and Lee obtained possession of Fort Motte. Burning arrows fire the dwelling, and the defenders capitulate. So far, such was the history at Fort Motte, where the resistance was protracted for a far longer period than at Hays' Station, and where the inequality and inferiority of the British, to the assailing force, was much

greater than that of Hays to Cunningham. Did Marion hang and butcher the garrison for honorably maintaining their flag, to the last extremity? Where did our biographer learn his lessons of military morality, thus to venture on the assumption that a soldier-like manliness, in the defence of a post, is deserving of nothing but the gallows and the sword? We are gravely told that these brave fellows were warned, if they did not surrender, they should be butchered; and they were butchered when they did surrender. On this point both parties are agreed. Our authorities continue the story thus:—

Hays, admitted to terms for himself and party, laid down his arms, and fancied that all was safe. But, no sooner had this surrender been made, than Cunningham told certain of his men to enter the block house, and select such of the prisoners as they desired should be spared. The women and small children—for this little military post was simply a temporary neighborhood refuge against wandering marauders—were set aside;—so also were a few persons,—the Tinsleys, the Saxons and the Dunlaps—chiefly because of their extreme youth. The rest were taken out, fourteen in number, were marched to an old field, and made to take their seats on the ground. Two of these, Col. Hays and Daniel Williams, were then detached from the rest and hurried to the ridge-pole of a fodder-stack, where an attempt was made to hang them. The pole breaking with their weight, they fell, half strangled, to the ground; when Cunningham, with a certain portion of his men, rushed in and hewed them to pieces with their swords. Joseph Williams, a boy but fourteen years old, cried to his elder brother as they were thus putting him to death—"Oh! brother Daniel, what shall I tell mother!" The innocent boy never doubted but he should be sent home to carry the cruel tidings to his mother. It never entered his imagination that he too should fall a victim,—he, a child still warm from his mother's embrace—to the brutal fury of this reckless ruffian. His simple speech of inquiry was silenced by the sword-stroke of Cunningham, who left the one victim, struggling in the arms of death, to hew down the other. "You shall tell her nothing, you d—d rebel suckling!" was the brutal language, in which the sentence of his own death was conveyed to the ears of the wondering and scarce-believing child. These two Williams' were brothers to the brave Col. Williams, who fell at the head of the South Carolina column, in the famous victory gained over Ferguson at King's Mountain. Here were three sons of one Spartan mother, given up on the altars of a country's liberty, and we are to suffer these names to be dishonored and aspersed, in order that the odium should be removed, by an anonymous biographer, from the name of a proverbial monster. We dare not, for the sake of our children, no less

than our country, suffer these misrepresentations to pass unchallenged. The victims of this massacre were Col. Joseph Hays, Capt. Daniel Williams, Joseph Williams, Lieut. Christ. Hardy, Lieut. John Neill, Clement Hancock, Joseph Irby, Sen., Joseph Irby, Jun., John Milven, James Ferris, John Cook, Benjamin Goodman and Yancey Saxon. We owe it to themselves and to posterity to chronicle their names in connection with this history.

Substantially, our biographer confesses to this account of the massacre. He admits the partial hanging of Hays and Williams, by Cunningham, and his subsequently hewing them to pieces with his own sword. He justifies the murder of the former, on the vague accusation of "his cruelty to women and children;" and, of the latter, "for having murdered in cold blood his favorite follower, Thomas Ellison." No proofs of these charges are given; of the boy, Joseph Williams, he says nothing. John Cook, he admits Cunningham to have slain with his own hands; "being told" that he had been with Ritchie and Moore, by whom his brother had been whipped to death. "He then gave permission to his men to do as they pleased with the rest. All who had rendered themselves obnoxious, by acts of cruelty and plunder, were slain without mercy." We are reminded of the manner in which the Mexicans slaughtered their Texan captives—crimes that shocked the age, and render the Mexican name as odious, in the ears of humanity, as it is contemptible in the eyes of manhood. But we must not forget that the prisoners are not now put to death, for having dared to defend themselves. The ground is varied slightly. It is because they have been cruel, because they have slain and plundered; and, under general and vague allegations of this sort, each trooper is permitted to amuse himself by hacking his prisoner to pieces. And all this is a perfectly justifiable practice according to our biographer. Here follows a quiet suggestion, which the humane reader is entreated to consider with all the coolness and patience of which he is master. "The execution took place about sunset, and doubtless the circumstance of having been kept, by the obstinacy of the defence, before this station, for a whole day, in the midst of a hostile country, had added nothing to the amiability of Cunningham and his band, and may have been the cause why justice on this occasion seems to have been so little tempered with mercy!" Amiable Cunningham! Amiable Band! How could these foolishly brave fellows of "Hays' Station" provoke such amiable persons to a forgetfulness of their usual tender mercies! It is unfortunate for this plea, that something like it must be made for these amiable marauders wherever they go. It is something gained, however, to the cause of humanity, when even our biographer seems to think that some apology is necessary for such a sweeping slaughter. It is

unlucky that we find a like history, at the massacre of Turner's party, on Cloud's creek, to which our biographer returns. He says: "At the affair of Turner's Station, there was no surrender made, nor quarter asked, *and of course such a party as Cunningham's could not burthen themselves with prisoners!*" It seems not, indeed! But can any thing be more monstrous than this language? Because we cannot burthen ourselves with prisoners, must we, therefore, butcher them? But a little while before, we find this same Turner, with his party, recapturing the plundered property from one of Cunningham's squads, and suffering the offenders to go free! But why was there no surrender made, and no quarter asked, in the case of Turner's party? We have shown, in the previous narrative, that the two persons sent forth by Turner to procure terms, were brutally shot down in their tracks. But quarter was asked. The testimony of the wretch, Westcott, when taunting the poor women while engaged in burying their dead, was to the effect that some of the prisoners had prayed for their lives upon their knees. The only exceptions mentioned, were those of Captain Turner, and the "d—d tough and obstinate old Butler!"

"At the time they were attacked, the people of that station were busy cutting up some beeves of which they had just plundered the Tories." Never was there a more wanton accusation! A single beef was slain, as we have shown, by a fatigued party, returning to their homes, who stooped to refresh themselves upon the way-side. But see how this reckless biographer leads to his own conviction. If the house to which Turner's party fled, were a military station of the whigs—which it was not—then the beef slain was likely to have been their own. A beef slain by a resident population, is, in all probability, the property of those who kill it. But of these facts, thus confidently alleged, not a syllable of proof is offered. "To conceal their occupation, they had fastened up blankets before the windows." A military station so open to the inspection of the curious, that blankets are necessary to conceal from scrutiny the doings of those within! What nonsense! The whole story, thus given us by our biographer, is, according to the current histories of the time and country, a tissue of falsehoods and absurdities. There was, as we have said before, no such place as Turner's Station, and the simple fact which our biographer furnishes, of the blankets before the windows, serves to confirm what our traditions assert,—namely, that the house to which the party fled for temporary shelter, was an unfinished log house, having no shutters to the windows, and possibly no fastening to the doors. A blanket hung before the window, might conceal the sentinel from the aim of the assailant without. In making it a military station, instead of recognizing it as the make-shift of an inferior party, suddenly assailed by a vastly su-

perior force, our biographer involves himself in all sorts of absurdities. "The house was surrounded, and the inmates cut down as they attempted to fly." In the first statement, we are told that the "house was taken, and the men put to death." This variation proves the writer's variety of resource, if not his consistency. To refuse to surrender, to attempt to fight it out, in a regular military station, implies any thing but a disposition to fly, and to make the attempt, in the face of a force ten times their number, by which they are completely surrounded, is quite as little consistent with their refusal to submit. The narrative of this modern biographer is as full of holes as the buckets of those daughters of antiquity, who were compelled to draw water in their sieves.

With these massacres the achievements of William Cunningham are at an end, with the present campaign. The country, now thoroughly alarmed, was every where rising behind him, and with this began the gradual dispersion of his banditti. He had, as we have shown, taken advantage of the general repose, and freedom from all apprehension which every where prevailed throughout the land. The region to which he penetrated, was occupied by farmers and a civil population only. There was not a body of regular troops within fifty miles. He steals suddenly, like the savages, upon the sleeping citizen. He comes silently like a thief in the night, and lays his ambush for the wayfarer and the woodman. He surrounds the dwelling of the unconscious father and the husband. He drags them to the massacre from the very arms of wife and children, and the brutal deed is executed in their sight. He is almost unopposed. If a brave squad of neighbors throw themselves into a hut and offer to defend it, the tiger-spirit of the monster is aroused, and instead of regarding the gallant enemy with respect, he slays him as he is proffering his sword. But he is not content simply to massacre—he must torture also. He and his myrmidons must see the writhings, and laugh at the contortions, and drink in the agonizing groans of the victims, whose lives are prolonged only that the moments may be measured by their agonies. And the faithful women, who come to gather up their mangled remains for the purpose of giving them decent sepulture, are goaded by cruel narratives of the mode of torture, and shamed by indecent comments, which shock the most inferior sensibilities. The massacre of Turner's party, we may add, was beheld by women. Their entreaties could not suffice to obtain the mitigation of a single pang, or the safety of a single life.

But the victim was about to turn upon his enemy. The pursuer became the pursued. We quote the language of our biographer. "By this time the country had become fully alarmed." In other words,—our brave Major of Loyalists had been achieving the triumphs that his eulogist seems

to think so creditable, in a region where he found only a feeble, an unsuspecting and unarmed population. "Parties under Pickens, Leroy Hammond, &c., commenced a vigorous pursuit." Well! he fought! He turned! He was surely not the man to skulk, when there were men aroused and ready to encounter him! What says our biographer? "And before they arrived at Charleston, Ringtail's mettle was well tried. Seven fresh parties started in pursuit of Cunningham, one after the other, but Ringtail carried his master safe off from the whole of them." Ringtail evidently shares, in no small degree, with Cunningham himself, the admiration of this eulogist. But these parties of Pickens, Hammond and others, were all small. The whole of them, together, did not exceed the number of men whom Cunningham brought into Edgefield. They were simply militia squads, numbering from twenty to fifty men, and setting off on the trail, as is the custom of the country, as soon as the active men of each beat could be brought together. We have heard already of Ringtail dying in Charleston, in consequence of this pursuit, and being buried with the honors of war,—the troops of Britain firing volleys over him, and the bells of St. Michael ringing mournfully throughout the day. We are not told whether the shipping in the harbor wore their colors at half-mast, but surely such an important portion of the usual ceremonials could not have been omitted, on an occasion of such touching interest.

As will have been seen by the date of Governor Guerard's proclamation, contained in a previous paper, Cunningham had reappeared in the region of country in which his chief crimes had been committed. He continued to command a small party, which did not often exceed twenty persons. These were some of the most hardy of the ruffians, who had attended him in his former bloody incursion. Like himself, they were reckless and abandoned ruffians, who had put themselves wholly out of the pale of the laws. They were all good woodmen, well acquainted with the country, and excellent riders. The horsemanship of Cunningham, in particular, was considered very remarkable. He now rode a horse, perhaps scarcely less famous than the Ringtail of which our biographer was so lavish in his eulogy. This animal was commonly called Middleton's mare,—her proper name was "Silver Heels." We have before us, at this moment, amongst a variety of papers, original and otherwise, from which much of the material of our narrative is drawn, the original letter of the Hon. Arthur Middleton, acknowledging the return of the mare, at the hands of Captain William Butler, by whom she was captured in a pursuit of Cunningham, to which we have yet to refer. Middleton writes,—“She was got by my horse, Lofty, out of a chestnut mare I bought of Mr. John Parker, and was taken away, a yearling, by

some of Prevost's (General Prevost of the British army) parties." Silver Heels was equally remarkable for her speed and bottom. Her appearance was such as to attract instant attention. She was an animal of great beauty—a sorrel with gray hairs intermixt, hind feet white, or rather of a silvery color, just above the fetlocks. Cunningham, himself, was a tall, spare man, of good appearance, active frame, and, at this period, about thirty-two years old. His second in command at this time was the same Ned Turner, of whose killing by Towles, his burial and resurrection, we have written in preceding pages. Dick Turner, another of the party, and one of Cunningham's lieutenants, rode a large black mare, called Pickens' mare, which had been stolen from him, and was finally restored to him by recapture. The names of others of Cunningham's band, on the marauding expedition, which he took into the interior, in the spring of 1782, are remembered by local tradition. We note these minor matters as illustrative of the tenacity with which the people of the country retain the facts in connection with the bloody inroads of this partisan. Among these were Hal Foster, J. Niblets, Will. Hellams—this man remarkable for his audacity and ferocious courage—Jack Davis and John Hood, whom Cunningham's biographer describes as a "very daring fellow." Many of these persons had lived on the Saluda, and were well acquainted with the localities and people. They too were well known. Their re-appearance caused a very lively sentiment of indignation and horror. Captain William Butler, a son of the man whom Cunningham had murdered, was then in command of a small company of mounted men, raised under the orders of General Pickens, for frontier defence. He at once summoned together as many of his command as were within convenient distances. His muster roll, which is preserved, acknowledges the presence of seventeen men. The following names are given us: Captain William Butler, John Corley, (acting as second in command,) Thomas Butler, Sherwood Corley, John Berry, Frederick Scissom, Owen Fort, Joseph Nunn, Richard Corley, Abner Corley, Joshua Moats, Jacob Smith, Ker Corley and Samuel DeLoach. The frequency of the same family name in our narratives shows, quite as much as any thing else, how entirely the risings on these occasions were those of small neighborhoods only. We have even a description, in some instances, of the horses ridden by those parties. William Butler rode a bay horse, called "Ranter;" John Corley, a roan mare, called "Sal Wines;" Thomas Butler, a sorrel, called "Slang;" "Selim" was the name of Abner Corley's horse, a sorrel, with white foot and star; the animal ridden by Sherwood Corley was a sorrel roan, very much resembling the Silver Heels of Cunningham, though an inferior nag; Ker Corley had a bay mare; and the

steed of John Berry, was a black mare, with two white feet and "a snip in her nose;" Jacob Smith was mounted on "Schuylkill," a blood mare, of high reputation. Of Captain William Butler something should be said, as it pleases our biographer to speak of him somewhat sneeringly. We shall show the reason why, hereafter.

William Butler, the son of Capt. James Butler, whom Cunningham slew, was a Lieutenant in the battle of Stono. He afterwards served in the Cavalry squadron of Count Pulaski. He was under General Pickens, in the battles of Augusta and "Ninety-Six;" was acting as the Lieutenant of Capt. Michael Watson, when the latter was killed on Dean Swamp, and was serving in the same capacity with Capt. Ryan, when Ryan fell in an affair with the Tories near Orangeburg. In February, 1782, at the instance of General Pickens, he was made Captain of a mounted corps, with a portion of which we find him now on the trail of Cunningham. Leaping, somewhat awkwardly perhaps, over present events, we find him, at the close of the war, appointed a Brigadier of the State of South Carolina, by a vote of its Legislature. On the resignation of Gen. Pickens, Butler succeeded him as one of the two Major Generals of South Carolina. In 1801, he was elected to Congress from Ninety-Six District, in the place of Robert Goodloe Harper, and served in that body till 1813, when he was selected by Governor Allston, (1814) in a very flattering letter, to take command of the troops of the country, called to the seaboard, in the momentary apprehension of British invasion. In the absence of Major Gen. Thos. Pinckney, he enjoyed the honorable command of the whole harbor. He was a general favorite with his troops, and at the time of his command, had two sons in the Regular Service. Capt. Geo. Butler was stationed for some time at Fort Johnson, and, on his promotion to a majority, was sent to Norfolk. Dr. Wm. Butler was appointed by Gen. Jackson, a surgeon in the army, and served in that capacity at the battle of New Orleans. It is of this individual, then, whose whole family, from sire to son, were thus prominent in the service of the country—of a citizen, thus highly honored and distinguished by his native State,—that a biographer of "Bloody Bill Cunningham," writing at this day—to whom all these particulars should be known as thoroughly as to ourselves—who is in all probability a resident of the same State,—it is of such a person that he uses the belittling phrase "a Capt. Butler,"—an unhappy error of taste, which proves nothing more conclusively, than the diseased blindness, and the prejudiced hostility of the writer. We waste no comments upon this weakness. It is of a sort to be pitied, and is scarce deserving of reproach. To resume.

Having assembled his party, seventeen in number, Butler took the trail of Cunningham, which

led towards the Little Saluda. Reaching the house of Aaron Etherage—a whig who had been "lying out," through fear of the marauders, he came in and told them that Cunningham had gone down the river. The pursuing party came across the trail near Jacob Pope's and followed it nearly to Wood's. Here they were at fault. Cunningham's party had scattered at this point, some taking one and some another direction, as was their usual practice, the better to cover the country and elude pursuit. They came together again, by previous concert, at convenient places. Butler's party was compelled to halt at Wood's. They could not cover the trail, and finally concluded to follow the large track of a single horse, which brought them into the old Cherokee road, about a mile below West's ford on the Little Saluda. Here, it was evident that Cunningham's party had reunited, and had gone off in the direction of Joe Cunningham's, who lived in the Fork of Big and Little Saluda. It was now about sunset, and the evening set in with rain. It was soon found impossible to keep the trail; but the party pressed forward until they came within a short distance of Joe Cunningham's, when they halted, and Thomas Butler and Abner Corley were sent forward to see how the land lay, and if possible to obtain from Joe, some tidings of the enemy. Joe was a disaffected man, but harmless—not a malignant. In this establishment the gray mare seems to have been the better horse, and when the two scouts hailed at the door of Joe Cunningham's, the "gude wife" came out to the fence. She was Irish as well as her husband, and, unlike the generality of Irish emigrants, they belonged to the Tory faction. But they were inclined to peace, having no power of mischief, and were tolerated by the Whigs accordingly. In the darkness of the evening, the old woman mistook the two troopers for two of Bill Cunningham's men, Hellams and Niblets, and they encouraged the mistake. They affected to have lost the trail of their party, and she summoned her husband to the conference. The garrulous dame suggested all the cues to Butler and Corley, and the result was that they succeeded in learning the route which the object of their pursuit had taken. Cunningham had gone in the direction of Caradine's ford, on Big Saluda. It was concluded by the party to carry the "ould man" with them as a guide, and Joe was made to mount without being allowed to pay much attention to his toilet. His costume was pretty nearly as scant at starting, as when he had left the bed at the summons of his unwisely communicative dame; and furnished a subject of frequent merriment to the troopers. Our unwillingness to burden our narrative with unnecessary details, prevents us from giving one or two stories of a ludicrous character which grew out of events upon the route, and which are before us in the M.S. of one of the party. We may make use of them hereafter. Joe led them

safely across the ford and was then dismissed with some parting injunctions to beware of taking cold. He did not suffer from the expedition. The pursuing party struck the Newberry side, in an old field, but failed to cover the trail. The rain, still continuing, had obliterated all traces of the fugitives. The powder of the pursuers had also become wet, and rendered their fire-arms useless. But they went forward, the day following, again struck the trail; and, keeping it about a mile, again found where the party had separated. Here they resolved to ride to the house of one John Griffith, in order to procure food for themselves and horses. The immediate approach to Griffith's house was by a short lane from which there ran, at a right angle, a long line of fence, in the direction that Cunningham was supposed to have taken. At this fence three men were placed in ambush. Butler and John Corley took their positions at the end of the lane, while the remainder of the party pushed forward to the house. Here they commenced feeding the horses, their bits being unremoved, and the men standing beside them ready to mount. Hardly had they begun when a sound of horses' feet was heard along the string of fence, and Butler gave the word to mount. The three men in ambush fired at the same moment, and dropt one of three of Cunningham's party, who seem to have been in pursuit of a gray mare; which, having been stolen from the neighborhood, was making all haste back to her rightful owner. The unlucky mare was killed by the same fire which dropped one of the pursuers. The two surviving Tories fled, and were pursued with all possible celerity. They escaped, and succeeded in warning their comrades. When Butler's party reached the spot where Cunningham had been encamped, they found the nest still warm. The proofs of recent occupancy were frequent. The fugitive had taken up his quarters judiciously, and with the proper forethoughts of the partisan. His flight was pursued up the waters of a small branch which led through a tangled thicket. The waters were still muddied from his progress through them. For ten miles he was followed without being seen. But the trail had become clearer, and there were indications which led Butler to conclude that his enemy was at hand. He pursued with more caution, and soon had the satisfaction to discover that Cunningham had halted. Believing that he had eluded pursuit by the route taken, and fancying that his retreat was sufficiently hidden in the depth of wood into which he had led the party, the marauder gave the word to strip the horses. He had with him fifteen men. Our biographer admits but six. These were mostly persons who were notorious in the bloody scout of which we have given the history already. The pursuing party were composed of the kinsmen and immediate friends and neighbors of their former victims. They were seventeen in number. So

nearly were they matched, so embittered against each other by numerous deeds of blood and vengeance, the affair promised to take the character of a desperate duel, rather than of any ordinary combat. Butler felt this, and prudently made his arrangements for effecting a surprise. Exhorting his men to do their duty, and impressing them earnestly with the true dangers of the issue, no quarters being counted on, by either party,—he assigned to John Corley, with five men, a certain progress, to intercept the enemy's flight;—four men were to steal forward in the cover of an old hedge row, now overrun with thickets, in order to fire upon the Camp, which Butler and eight men were to assault with all their energies. Our biographer speaks of a tent which Cunningham had with him; and, in the same breath, tells us of but six men; as if so small a party, depending upon their celerity and caution, would encumber themselves with such an ostentatious military appanage. Our accounts report their condition much more truly. His tent consisted of the cloaks and blankets of the party which were hung up as well that they might be dried, as for any protection from the weather which they might afford. Our biographer tells us that their horses were unsaddled. This was not the case; nor had they laid aside their weapons as he asserts. This would be to admit their total improvidence, to confess a degree of carelessness and imprudence which would disgrace a military man, and was totally inconsistent with what we know of Cunningham. That they were cooking a hasty mess of porridge, is admitted. But they were certainly surprised. The first intimation they had of the success of the pursuers in keeping on their trail, was the sudden appearance of Butler's party of eight about their camp. "*Savez qui peut*" was the instinctive cry. There was no time to count numbers—no time to make preparations; and the troopers sprang to their ready-bitted steeds, with the promptness of men, practised in all sorts of military enterprises, and who fought with halters about their necks. The surprise would have been complete, and the annihilation of the party certain, but for the timely challenge of Butler's squad, by one of the men of Cunningham. This it was, that led to the charge of Butler, which was prematurely made, before his other parties had well reached their places of destination. Just as he entered the camp, Cunningham mounted "*silver heels*"—the famous mare of Middleton. His saddle, saddle-bags and holsters were all on; he did not bestraddle a naked steed as our biographer, with some policy, is pleased to assert; nor did he leave behind him his weapons. It is not pretended by his enemies that he would not have fought well, and to the last, had he not been surprised;—the want of bravery was never laid to the door of this marauder, whatever may have been thought of his other deficiencies. But the exigency forbade the thought of conflict. The assault

had been too sudden, too unexpected, to allow of concert or preparation. The party was dispersed in an instant, each man dashing away for his individual safety, without regard to his companions. Their policy was to scatter in order to divide their pursuers, whom they naturally supposed to be more numerous than they were. In the first onslaught, firearms were drawn by both parties, but they proved useless, the powder being damp, and refusing fire. In this moment, Butler got sufficiently near to his hereditary foe to strike at him with his sword; and, fixing his eye upon the one victim, left it to his party to pursue the rest. Cunningham and Dick Turner, according to our authorities, ran side by side. Our biographer speaks of his special companion in this chase, as Capt. Hood. The difference is unimportant, and our biographer is singularly costive in his narrative of this affair, and does not seem to have been aware that Butler pursued his subject on no less than three occasions. We shall supply some of his omissions. The chase at first led through a low ground, old-field, a part of which had grown up in briars; and at length made for the river. After a while, Cunningham and Turner separated, Butler still continuing the pursuit of the one, and Abner Corley and John Berry following Turner. Butler and Cunningham were both admirable riders, and both were admirably mounted. As long as they ran in the woods, the training of "Ranter," gave him the advantage; but Middleton's mare, upon a clear track, would soon show her heels to almost any rival. It was Butler's object to make Cunningham a prisoner. Such a criminal was needed as a terrible example to evil doers;—but he more than once struck at him with his sword, and summoned him to fight or to surrender. The reply of Cunningham was simply to put his pistol over his shoulder. He snapped it several times. At each failure, Butler cried to him—"You are gone, Cunningham;" while the latter silently gave the rowel to his mare and went ahead. His good fortune brought him to an open path, in which his mare could show both blood and bottom. Then, rising in his stirrups he slapped the animal affectionately on the neck, and with a shout left his enemy behind him. But before this advantage was attained, the fugitive had thrown off his saddle-bags, to lighten himself, and finally lost his cap and sabre. These fell into the hands of his pursuer.

Meanwhile, Dick Turner, who was proverbial for his prowess, had turned on Abner Corley, and it was only with the reappearance of John Berry and Capt. Butler, that the daring fellow resumed his flight. The chase was hot and heavy, and more successful than was that on the trail of Cunningham. A sword cut of Corley above the eye, followed by a second which rendered useless his bridle arm, brought Turner to the ground. They were engaged in tying him, when Frederick Scis-

som rode up, and without a word, shot the prisoner dead with his pistol. This bloody deed, though denounced and disapproved by all present, was supposed to have had its excuse in the following facts: Turner was a brutal ruffian, who, in one of his marauding expeditions, went to the mother of Scissom and required her to tell where her son had gone with his scout. The old woman either would not, or could not tell, and to extort the fact, she was tied to a tree and mercilessly flogged by the inhuman wretch. The son had sworn his death, and a wild sense of justice had held him to the performance of his oath.

Niblets, another of Cunningham's party, was captured on this occasion, but his fate was much more indulgent than that of Turner. He was entrusted to the keeping of a good-natured fellow, named Owen Fort. Owen was a tender-hearted lad, and was persuaded by the cunning prisoner to undo his bands, the fellow being mounted on a good horse. To the surprise of Owen, he rode off, and gave a deaf ear to his repeated intimations, that he, Niblets, was taking a course quite opposite to that which he, Owen, desired he should go. Fort said that he could easily have cut down the prisoner, while escaping, but that the sight of his bald head disarmed his fury. It seemed too tender to be dealt with by the broad sword. Owen's heart was made of stuff quite too tender for the rough pleasures of a dragoon life.

Cunningham's saddle-bags contained his pocket-book and some other articles of value. His uniform coat was found tied up in a handkerchief. It was of rich material, covered with lace, and, with its two epaulettes, formed quite a showy prize for Sherwood Corley, by whom it was secured, and who kept it a long time as one of his trophies. It was sold some time after the war, to a stranger, who gave for it, to Corley, a mare and colt;—and it may have found its way back to its original owner. The sword was yielded to Captain Butler.

The adventures of the day were not over. The party of Butler had re-assembled. It will be recollected that Sherwood Corley owned a horse somewhat resembling that which was ridden by Cunningham. In possession of the cap and regimentals of that person, the idea occurred to the party that, by dressing Corley up in the uniform, and sending him forth on his own horse, some of the fugitives of Cunningham's band might be drawn from their hiding places. The thought was acted upon. Separated, some little distance from his friends, and moving slowly through the woods, the disguised trooper was hailed by the voice of a man, who proved to be Jack Davis. "Is that you?" he cried. Corley failed to play the rest of his part well. He could look, but not speak, the Cunningham. His "Come to!" alarmed Davis, who began to move off rapidly. Corley, with a shout, dashed after him, and Davis met him with a pair of fine

brass-barrelled pistols, and was preparing for fight when others of the party made their appearance. He resumed his flight, pushed with all speed for the river, and plunged headlong in, without stopping to seek a ford. His descent was made from a steep bank. He rode "old Crap," a fine horse, which he had stolen on the previous incursion, in the fall of 1781, from Bud Escridge. He was followed into the river by two or three of the men. Twice did John Bery snap at him with his pistol. DeLoach was about to shoot him from the bank, when Butler rode up and arrested him. He was afraid that some of his own men would be hurt, and was willing to spare Davis as less obnoxious than the greater number of the band. But Sherwood Corley, who was in the river, either not hearing, or not heeding the order, emptied the damp priming from his pistol, and, with great coolness, filled the pan with fresh from his powder-horn. He slew Davis at the first fire, just as he had left the river and was about to ascend the opposite bank. His grave, on the Edgefield side, may still be traced. The scene in the river is described by an eye-witness as singularly exciting. The plunging and rearing of the horses, scuffling against the stream, up to their saddle skirts, and frantic with the shouting and shooting, while they strove in this unwonted element, was long remembered by those who were of the party, when, perhaps, more important details were forgotten.

Our biographer does not seem to be aware of Cunningham having returned again after the war was quite over, sometime in the spring of 1783,—or he may have confounded, as is probable, two very distinct affairs. We will amend for him in this particular, though what we have to say must be comprised in a brief paragraph. We have no such elaborate details as in the preceding narrative, which was gathered from the lips of those who were parties to, and present at all the proceedings. At the time mentioned, Cunningham wandered back to the old range, accompanied by two followers only,—Austen Moultrie and Jack Prescott, the latter, a ruffian, dyed *a capite ad calcem*, with blood and infamy. What the purpose was in thus returning, after the British had left the country, is not known, though generally suspected. Captain Butler was soon upon his trail, attended by John Corley and two other persons. They came up unexpectedly with him and his two followers, at a place called The Cat Tail Ponds, between Cloud's and Hollow creeks, near the Lexington Line. Seeming to distrust his companions, Cunningham separated from them. A price was on his head, and he might well become suspicious. This was the period of Gov. Guerard's proclamation. With the first glimpse of Butler, he made for a difficult pass at Cloud's creek. Here his horse, Silver Heels, springing from bank to bank, struck a rock on the opposite side and fell. Her rider, with great readi-

ness and skill, threw himself off as he fell, only to recover his seat at the moment when the horse regained her footing. But she was stunned for awhile, and found it hard work to keep ahead of her pursuers. But she did so, in a pursuit which was continued for two days without flagging. But for a severe leap, which Butler's horse made on one occasion, in the chase, and by which she was severely injured, it is probable Cunningham would not have escaped. He owed his safety once more to the blood and bottom of his steed. He was more than once nearly within reach of his enemy's weapon. His course was by "the Ridge," and was continued from Cloud's creek nearly to Pine Log Bridge, upon the Edisto. Butler was frequently heard to say, that this pursuit was more full of peril and adventure than any in which he had ever been engaged. It is to be regretted that we have no details. The family of Butler, to this day, retain some of the trophies which were captured by their ancestor, on this, or on the preceding occasions.

Our biographer tells us, that Cunningham got safe to Florida, and afterwards went to England and enjoyed the honor of a presentation at Court. He was allowed, for the rest of his life, the half pay of a Major in the British army. He married in Charleston,—to whom is not mentioned—but had no children. He was a coarse, illiterate man, of a rude, wild nature, who commenced by taking sides with the whigs, and afterwards with the tories;—who commenced with one set of associates, and ended by murdering them in cold blood. It is said that he had his private wrongs, and these are spoken of as if they justified his brutal revenges. But such morals cannot be suffered to prejudice the judgments of the young in a Christian community, and in an age of civilization. The effort made to rescue his name from infamy, must not only fail of its object, but is singularly unfortunate, as, in the insane attempt to disparage and assail other names, it recalls narratives which society and the historian have equally been disposed to yield quietly to oblivion. That we review the record is a necessity imposed upon us by this unwise biographer. We must not suffer the sacred names of the Revolution, of the men who sealed their fidelity with their blood—to be defiled, or obliterated from our most grateful memorials and monuments. For farther sketches of the "Bloody Scout" of Cunningham, we refer the curious reader to certain highly interesting sketches furnished by Col. Benj. F. Perry, of Greenville, South Carolina, to the *Magnolia* magazine. Future historians will do well to consider these materials with consideration and respect. But for the space we have already occupied, we should be pleased to use them here.

We shall conclude these too much prolonged details, with one event which belongs to the connection. It will be remembered that, in previous pages,

we spoke of the brutalities of a man named Love, who distinguished himself at Cloud's creek by his wanton torture of the victims—hewing off their limbs and thrusting his sword through portions of their bodies which were not vital, in order to enjoy their contortions. At Hay's Station, being something of a violinist, he played for the prisoners on their way to execution, compelling some of them to dance to his music. It is scarcely possible to conceive of such a monster, yet history silences our doubts by pointing to Nero. Tradition insists upon these assertions. Among the persons with whom he thus amused himself, was Samuel Saxon. Saxon was finally saved from the massacre by the interposition of a negro. But, before this, Love compelled him to foot it to his music, on a progress supposed to be to the grave. This and the horrible crimes he witnessed at the hands of this petty tyrant, sank deeply into the soul of Saxon. He remembered it in after days. In 1784, Love, who had escaped the vengeance of the pursuers while the war lasted, fancied he could re-appear with safety in a country which he had outraged by his atrocities. He was arrested on the charge of murder,—the charge having reference to crimes which he had committed during the war, and for which no war, it was thought, could be a palliation. It was generally understood that he would plead the treaty of peace with Great Britain, in bar of the prosecution, and that the plea would avail him before the Court. But the relatives of those who had been murdered by him, were resolved not to be baffled of their vengeance; and as soon as the verdict of acquittal was rendered, and the Judge, (Burke,) had returned from the Court, the prisoner was seized upon by James Caldwell, supported by Wm. Butler, Jos. Irby, Dunlap and Saml. Saxon, who, in defiance of the Court, and in the presence of an approving multitude, carried into execution the sentence of death, which the ordinary tribunal of the country had refused to award. The particulars are on record, in a letter of Judge Burke, himself, to the Governor of the State. It will be found that the preliminary statements of the Judge differ in some degree from those which we have given, but the substantial facts of the narrative are unaffected. Our particulars are drawn from sources more distinct and conclusive, than he could have gathered at that moment of hurry and popular excitement. With his letter we conclude our history.

JUDGE BURKE'S LETTER.

CHARLESTON, 14th December, 1784.

SIR,—I arrived from my circuit this evening, and take the earliest opportunity to communicate to your excellency a very extraordinary affair, which happened in the town of Ninety-Six, on the 7th ult. I suppose your excellency is not un-

acquainted with the noted William Cunningham, who, in the winter of 1781, at the head of about 150 white men and negroes, with orders from the British colonel, Balfour, made an excursion into the interior settlements of this state. Having killed in his route every person he met with, (it is said to the number of fifty,) whom he suspected to be the friends to the country, and burnt their habitations—he came at length to a house near Bush River, where an American party of thirty-five men were posted under the command of Colonel Hayes. These, refusing to surrender at discretion, an attack commenced, and a hot fire was kept up, with some loss on both sides for about three hours. The British party possessed themselves of the out-buildings, and at last set fire to the house in which Colonel Hayes was stationed. In this distressed situation, reasonable terms were offered—that they should march out, lay down their arms, and be treated as prisoners of war; and a capitulation was formally signed and interchanged. The Americans had no sooner marched out, and surrendered their arms, but the British seized Colonel Hayes; and with the capitulation in his hand, pleading the terms of it, and begging for mercy, they hanged him to the limb of a tree, and then fired a bullet through him. Captain Williams, the second in command, was treated in the same manner. After which Cunningham, with his own hands, slew three of the prisoners, and then desired his men to follow his example. A most cruel slaughter now ensued, nineteen of them were butchered, and the rest escaped their fate by means too tedious now to mention.

A man of the name of Love, who had dwelt in the district before and after the war commenced, and married there, was one of Cunningham's party, and a principal actor in this tragical business. After the slaughter was over, Love traversed the ground where lay the dead and dying, his former neighbors and old acquaintances, and as he saw signs of life in any of them, he ran his sword through and despatched them. Those already dead, he stabbed again; and when others, seemingly without life, and who were pierced by his sword, gave involuntary convulsions from the pain, to these he gave new wounds. Many other circumstances of barbarous insult to the dead bodies of Colonel Hayes, Captain Williams, and others, are related by Majors Hunter, Downes, Mulvee, and sundry other gentlemen of worth, and honor, who were made prisoners on that occasion; but who fortunately survived the massacre, some through the good will of a neighbor, and others by the intercession of their own slaves, then under arms with the enemy.

Thenceforth Love was held in universal execration, and went off with the British; but some time ago, venturing to return to the vicinity of Ninety-Six, he was taken up by a justice of the

peace, who committed him to jail, thinking so barbarous a man did not come under the treaty of peace, so as to be sheltered from prosecution. The attorney for the State pressed the matter before the court of sessions. But I overruled the prosecution, and gave it as my opinion, that his conscience, his feelings alone, stood responsible for what was alleged, and on motion of his council he was discharged. I could not help remarking at the same time, that no appearance, not a look of disapprobation, was directed against him; all seemed reconciled to the court's decision. Love's affair closed the business of the sessions, and the court then adjourned to the 28th of April next.

A party of men, as respectable for good character, and services in the war, as most in the district, composed of the fathers, sons, brothers, and friends of the slain prisoners, had attended court as usual, and waited until the Judge had left the court-house, and arrived at his lodgings. And then, without tumult or noise, they made Love a prisoner, and put him on horse back. Through the whole affair they studiously affected to preserve every appearance of respect towards the Judge; for though the house which they supposed he had entered, led directly to the place where they intended to convey Love, yet they took a circuit another way, to the skirt of a wood, where arriving under a tree, to an arm of which they tied one end of a rope, with the other around his neck, and bid him prepare to die; he urged in vain the injustice of killing a man without a trial, and they reminding him that he should have thought of that when he was slaughtering their kinsmen. The horse, drawn from under him, left him suspended until he expired; and the multitude dispersing back into town, all was quiet as if nothing had happened.

Thus I have related this unhappy affair and the motives which led to it as I heard it. And I can assure your excellency, that whatever appearance this transaction may have to the country, the people of Ninety-Six appear very desirous to forget the injuries of the war, and settle the government, provided those do not return among them, who have committed wanton acts of barbarity. Many plunderers and other mischievous people, who had taken part with the enemy, now set down among them without molestation; nor can I learn that a serious resentment exists against any man who acted like a soldier, and fought them, or killed their friends in fair open action. But it is to be lamented that such men as Love is described to have been, will be so infatuated as to return, to keep alive the remembrance of past calamities, and thus prevent a restoration of public tranquillity.

I have the honor to be, your excellency's most obedient humble servant,

ÆDANUS BURKE.

His Excellency Gov. Guerard.

MEMORY.

The past she ruleth. At her touch
Its temple-valves unfold,
And from their gorgeous shrines descend
The mighty men of old :
At her deep voice the dead reply,
Dry bones are cloth'd and live,—
Long perished garlands bloom anew,
And buried joys revive.

When o'er the *future*, many a shade
Of saddening twilight steals,
Or the dimm'd *present* to the soul
Its emptiness reveals,
She opes her casket, and a cloud
Of cheering perfume streams,
Till with a lifted heart we tread
The pleasant land of dreams.

Make friends of potent memory,
Oh! young man in thy prime,
And with her jewels bright and rare,
Enrich the hoard of Time;
Yet if thou mockest her with weeds,
A trifer 'mid her bowers,
She'll send a poison through thy veins,
In life's disastrous hours.

Make friends of potent Memory,
Oh! maiden, in thy bloom,
And bind her to thine inmost heart,
Before the days of gloom;
For sorrow softeneth into joy
Beneath her wand sublime,
And she immortal robes can weave
From the frail threads of Time.

Harford. L. H. S.

MENAGE.

Æg. Menagius, præter eruditissimos in Diogenem Lærtium commentarios, præter Italica metra cultissima, etiam Latina Poemata scripsit varii argumenti et generis, omnia Musis applaudentibus.—Bonichius, De Poetis, p. 116.

We have lately found much pleasure in looking over an old copy of Ménage's "*Poemata*."* In thus perusing a contemporary record of the great ones of that wonderful period, we seem to be brought into actual contact with the Sevigné, La Fayette, Huets, Scuderys, De Retz's and Ramboeuille, to whom the various epistles, epigrams and

* *Ægidii Menagii Poemata*, Quinta editio, prioribus longè emendatior. Parisiis, Apud Sebastianum Mabre Cramoisy, Regis Typographum, viâ Jacobæ, sub Cicomis. MDCLXVIII. Cum Privilegio Regis.